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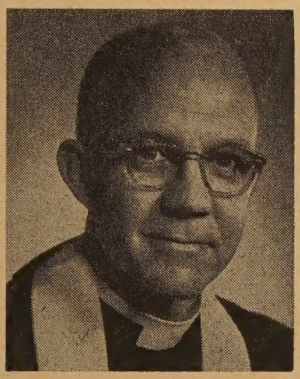
A Journal of Contemporary Preaching



J. Claude Evans:

Being a Christian When Everybody Is a Christian

Robert J. McCracken • The Christian Way
William O. Byrd • Mistakes I Have Made
Huston Smith • The Incredible Assumption
Edward W. Meury • Halves of One Another
Franklin D. Elmer, Jr. • Three Homilies

CONRAD H. MASSA
WANTED: A THEOLOGY OF PREACHING

VOL. XXXII, No. 2 FEBRUARY 1961

The Pulpit

Founded 1929 by Charles Clayton Morrison as a journal of contemporary preaching.

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35 cents single issue.

$4 a year in U.S.A. and Canada.

$4.50 foreign.

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Published monthly by the Christian Century Foundation, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5, Ill. HArrison 7-5380.

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PULPIT POST

The Abominable List Grows

SIR: I noted with interest and hearty agreement your list of 10 words that could be well omitted from articles and sermons. May I add an expression that is entirely overworked and was an abomination to me the first time I heard it. I refer to "picked his brains."

I am referring to page 6 of the December issue. But did you notice how many times the word "relevance" was used in the article on the next page? I counted 4 in just a few paragraphs.

HOWARD M. LEHN
Pioneer Presbyterian Church
Burns, Ore.

See What We Mean?

SIR: In your December issue your west coast friend's suggestion (strengthened by your own) that at least ten words should be pruned from our sermons is all to the point.

Why is it that in every generation of preachers and/or seminary professors the stance of communicating the kerygmatic confrontation becomes the victim of so much involvement that the thrust for dimension in depth is lost in existential dialogue and thus loses much of its relevant meaning?

Oh dear, can we ever learn to speak simple English again?

STILES LESSLY
Thomas Memorial Church,
Chicago, Ill.

Needed: Methodology In Homiletics

SIR: I have been taking The Pulpit for just a short time and I wish to say that one of the most stimulating and valuable aspects of it has been the articles. Keep up the good work.

In George C. Stewart's article, "Whither Homiletics?" (July), he makes the point that there is no theological journal devoted to homiletics as such. In short, there is no shaping of homiletical methodology in terms of what is taking place in the rest of theological education.

Some few men are in a position to do clinical work in the field of preaching. It always amazes me that with the apotheosis of the pulpit in American Protestantism there is not much more concrete guidance in the field of preaching. I did not believe that

(Continued on page 25)

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

VOLUME XXXII FEBRUARY 1961 No. 2

The Second Diluting Myth: Eclecticism

OUR first function as we confront the pagan mind of our time is not to explain such men to themselves or to interpret ourselves to them. It is not to publicize and promote the church. It is not to commend or to criticize the pagans' morality or to show in what way ours is superior. It is not to stand in a judicial role before their lack of faith nor to put our faith timidly before them as though they were judges of its validity. Our role is to stand them in any way we can before the eternal God and let the holiness of his claim and the certainty of his promises break upon them. Their malady is more serious than we have supposed. They have not only rejected Christ, they have rejected the Isaiah who is preliminary and substructural to that Christ. Their emptiness is anti-Christian in the most fundamental sense that they have not only rejected the Son of God but God himself. Not until they have heard Isaiah's "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory" can they heed Christ's "Come unto me." Until they get into their confession the first words of the creed, the Judaistic part, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth," they will not get into their confession the next words, the Christian part, "and in Jesus Christ his only son our Lord."

We shall not do this by tapering our gospel to the contours of the modern mind or by wrapping the cord of our gospel in the pretty, pleasing strands of non-Christian thought. To patronize pagan minds by adopting their language, their manners and their ideas will make us one with them but it will not make them one with us. To approach them in arguments which concede much in the hope of gaining a little will lose all. To grant that their splendid examples of stoical morality are enough, that the gospel of Christ cannot stand in our day without the buttressing of the sciences and the humanities, that communism or psychology or the eastern religions make up Christianity's deficiencies is to adopt a line which loses the gospel in its hectic attempt to be all things to all men. For the heart which in its emptiness scowls at all religion one thing is needed: the God of Isaiah as we know him in Jesus Christ.

Therefore we must say that the second myth which dilutes our gospel, the gospel we preach and the gospel our people partially accept, is *Eclecticism.* The eclectic is one who culls out of many religions and out of culture what he considers the choice ideas and then tries to weave them into one religion. What concerns us is not the non-Christian eclectic who picks out the "goodies" from several religions and puts them into his tiny bowl but the number of Christians — clergy and laity — who consciously or unconsciously feel the need to touch up Christianity here and there by the addition of some notion which is patently alien to Christianity. They suspect that Christ is not quite adequate for their salvation and their life. To use the term of the stock market and the gambler, they "hedge." They bet their lives on Christ and then reduce the risk by wagering a part of life on that which is not Christ. In a church I served it was two years before I discovered that one of the Sunday school teachers, who seemed to be doing a good job, never prepared her Sunday school lesson without consulting her horoscope. For her it could not be Christ alone; it had to be Christ *and* the fix of the stars. "Christ and" is the essence of *Eclecticism* within the church.

The peril is that we shall submerge cult in culture, that we shall seek to make Christ relevant by reduction, that we shall tailor him to the dimensions of our day. We cannot extract ourselves from history nor should we treat contemptuously any media by which our culture makes possible a more effective communication of the gospel. But it is our business to present Christ's claim upon our people as a radical claim, an absolute and preemptive claim. This does not mean a return to that particularism which is characterized solely by denominationalism or biblicism or the mouthing of doctrinal terms. For many of us the reversion to previously discarded doctrinal terms is nothing more than an esoteric and magical word-waving. But it does mean that we must explore once more what the theologians meant by those creedal terms which now fall as a foreign language on the ears of our people: what profundities they explored in the human soul; what poignancies of human communion; what chaos is let loose in the heart, in the commonwealth, in the aching flesh of the world

(Continued on page 10)

Being a Christian When Everybody Is a Christian

By J. Claude Evans

Exodus 20:1-6. John 1:1-14.

IT WAS the famous Danish theologian, Soren Kierkegaard, who first pointed out how difficult it is to be a Christian when everybody is a Christian. He lived in Denmark in the nineteenth century. Denmark was a Christian nation. It had a state-supported church to which everybody belonged. Life was oriented within and regulated without by the heavy hand of the church. But this was just the problem. The Danish church, with long years of devotion to its own needs, had departed from the biblical faith. The needs of the institution rather than biblical faith determined the practices of religion. In his own studies, Kierkegaard was rediscovering this faith, and began to see how difficult it was to be a Christian when everybody was already a Christian.

I

Kirkegaard was right. What he said about Denmark in the nineteenth century applies to America in the mid-twentieth century. We are living at a time when nearly everybody is a Christian. Like the people of Denmark, most of you were, in effect, born into the church. You were baptized as an infant. You grew up, most of you, going to Sunday school and church as a part of your regular weekly activities. This morning, most of you made the decision to come to this worship service simply because this has been your pattern of Sunday activity for many years.

Nor are you alone in this pattern. For more than a hundred years, there has been a trend toward increased church membership and attendance in the United States. In 1850 only 16 per cent of the population were members of an organized church. By 1950, the percentage was 57 per cent. This had increased to 62 per cent in 1956, and I would guess that it is 65 per cent today.

More than this, piety has spread outside the organized church. Few politicians in America today would dare run for office unless they were members in good standing of one of the larger denominations. To be a Methodist is helpful, but to be a Baptist is better, at least in your chances for election in Texas. And to be a Baptist Sunday school teacher is best of all. Unless you live in Massachusetts, or Connecticut, or New Orleans, when it would pay to be a Roman Catholic.

Church is not the only place where one is led in formal prayer. Political conventions open with prayer and close with prayer. Congress and state legislatures have employed chaplains. The armed services, and now many industries, have chaplains to carry on a spiritual ministry. Not to be outdone, sororities and fraternities often have chaplains whose duty it is to lead the chapter in prayer and otherwise care for the spiritual life of the members. The American Legion has a "Back to God" movement in its program, and the Boy Scouts have a "God and Country Award." The phrase "under God" was added to the pledge of allegiance a few years ago, and now the motto "In God We Trust," imprinted on all coins of our country, is being printed on all greenbacks as well. One cannot but wonder whether this is the result of religious fervor or the consequence of inflation. It is getting so that a dollar is worth so little about all we have left to trust in is God.

II

Underneath this popularity of religion there is a subtle change of emphasis. Christianity is no longer a religion that makes demands upon people. It has quietly, almost imperceptibly, metamorphosed into a religion that is good for people. It gives answers to human needs. It lubricates the clashing gears of human relations. It gives peace of mind to the anxious, a serene spirit to the worried, a sense of belonging to the lonely, a promise of success to the young entrepreneur, a happy marriage to the single, an exciting romance without guilt feelings to the romantic teenager, a glow of warm emotion to the worshiper, and a use of divine powers for human purposes for all who will believe. No wonder everybody is a Christian to-

---

J. CLAUDE EVANS *became chaplain of Southern Methodist University on September 1, 1957. A graduate of Wofford College, he received his B.D. degree from Duke Divinity School, Duke University. In June, 1957, Wofford College conferred upon him the Doctor of Divinity degree. Dr. Evans' sermon is one in a series he preached at Sunday chapel at Southern Methodist University.*

lay. A man would be foolish not to be with all hese good and rewarding consequences.

What lies behind this self-centered resurgence of piety in America? Perhaps it is the cruel facts of human existence that, whether consciously acknowledged or not, do their work in the unconscious mind of man and are reflected in his outer needs for words of hope and comfort. We have lived through two world wars in one generation, and now are daily threatened with a third that could be the end of human life on this planet. We have lived through the use of two atom bombs so that the light from Hiroshima and Nagasaki mirrors man's potential inhumanity to man so terrifyingly that we suppress it into the subconscious; but we do not eradicate it. Perhaps it is the infinity of space that dazzles us. Or maybe it is Cuba and the Congo and a score of other places where we see a vibrantly alive and self-secure philosophy of communism opposed in half-hearted and often self-doubting measures by the democracies. We are in need of confidence and optimism at a time when on the world scene these are in short supply.

Or perhaps it is the leadership of men like Dr. Norman Vincent Peale and Billy Graham and the liberal social gospelers (those emphasizing more the "social" than the "gospel" side of the phrase) that have produced modern day folk religion, though it is difficult to say whether these men are more cause than effect. At any rate, they have come upon the scene at a time when modern Americans are pretty well agreed that God is useful to human purposes, and religion has a place in the goals and ideals of culture. So it is that Dr. Peale can preach about an easy-to-obtain peace of mind so convincingly that it makes most of us uneasy and guilty when we do not find our peace of mind at so easy a price. Or Billy Graham can preach repentance by coming forward and accepting Christ by shaking his hand and do it so persuasively that many a person, who himself practices daily penitence and daily acceptance of forgiveness, somehow feels he has not taken that extra step to shake Christ's hand and has hidden guilt feelings about it.

Or perhaps modern religiosity stems from the effect American ideals and ideas have had upon the three dominant faiths in our country: Judaism, Roman Catholicism, and Protestantism. At least, this interpretation has been given scholarly credence by Will Herberg in his popular book, *Protestant, Catholic, and Jew*. These three faiths have become three melting pots of Americanism — with emphasis upon the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the dignity of the individual as its chief ideas. These ideas have blended with our doctrinal and church heritage to the point of merger and we have hardly noticed it. And if you add to this David Reisman's contention that Americans have become "other-directed" to the point that we live in a culture where individuals are busy conforming to the group standards around us, more concerned with adjustment than achievement, religion becomes a symptom of conformity and a promoter of togetherness.

III

To all of this, doubtless, you have been raising questions. Is this bad? What's wrong with growing church membership? Why not rejoice over success rather than bemoan success?

No doubt the people of Amos' day, living at Bethel where he preached, felt the same way. It was a prosperous time. The sanctuaries were crowded with worshipers. People contributed generously to the support of the Jewish church. Yet, in the face of this, Amos delivered his blistering attack accusing the people of all manner of injustices and unrighteousness, for which the wealth and prosperity and beautifully appointed homes and the gorgeous women were a deceptive cover. Amos judged the quality of the religious life not by the prosperity or popularity of the religious institution. Rather, he judged the religion of Israel on the basis of what he saw in the homes, in the politics, in the economic practices, in the law courts. So ought we judge. While we crowd our churches, many of us make sorority or fraternity membership more important in our lives than our academic studies. This chapel is crowded today, but many an evening worship service will be held tonight at White Rock Lake or at the Coliseum parking lot and these will be crowded services too.

Or, if you like, look at Europe about 1500 A.D. The land was crowded with beautiful churches and great cathedrals. It was a culture united under the aegis of the church. When the church spoke, princes jumped and did the church's bidding. Yet we know from Luther and Calvin and Zwingli that the church of the Middle Ages, with all its pomp and power and popularity, was a corrupt church with a corrupt ministry. The Reformers judged by the quality of a man's personal relationship to God and neighbor and not by the prosperity or popularity of the religious institution. Luther judged on the basis of what he found in his own life and in the lives of people around him. So ought we to judge. It is a man's relationship to God that matters. This chapel is filled today, but I will warrant you that many, if not most, of you would be tongue-tied and stuttering and terribly embarrassed if suddenly you were asked to describe the meaning and content of your personal faith in God. You could describe the meaning and content of your faith in sororities or fraternities or clothes or dating or a thousand other enjoyable worldly activities, but could you relate it to God, without descending to the profane level of Jane Russell and call him an "everliving doll." To which I say *damn!* Now I ask you, "Who is guilty

of profanity here, Jane Russell or the chaplain?"

Where, then, is the remedy for our problem? The only way to be a Christian when everybody is a Christian without falling into the pit of religiosity where man makes use of God is to return to a biblical understanding of the Christian God, where God makes use of man. For it is the biblical understanding that faith in God is prior to correct beliefs, to proper doctrines, to right conduct, or even to a sterling character. All of these, taken from the human perspective, can become wholly self-centered and thus demonic instead of divine. Only when beliefs, doctrines, conduct, and even character stem from a prior faith in God do they have saving power among men.

IV

What is this biblical faith in God? For one thing, it is faith in the holiness and transcendence of God. It is faith in a God who is really God. It is not faith in a domesticated God who is a sort of glorified granddaddy of the human race. Listen to these words from the Old Testament:

> "Bless the Lord, O my soul!
> O Lord my God, thou art very great!
> Thou art clothed with honor and majesty,
> Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment,
> Who hast stretched out the heavens like a tent,
> Who hast laid the beams of thy chambers on the waters,
> Who makest the clouds thy chariot,
> Who ridest on the wings of the wind,
> Who makest the winds thy messengers,
> Fire and flame thy ministers.
> Thou didst set the earth on its foundations,
> So that it should never be shaken." Psalms 104:1-5.

Or again:

> "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
> You shall have no other gods before me . . . "
> Exodus 20:2-3.

What do these words mean? These words describe the faith of Israel in a God who is Creator. As Creator, God transcends his creation. God never was created. He always was. He never will die. He always will be. That's why he is God. As Creator, God transcends his creation and cannot be identified with anything in creation, even the highest of creation, man in his freedom. For all creation, including man, exists as created existence. Thus we say that God is other than his creation. Man is related to God, then, as a creature to creator, as the finite to the infinite, as the temporal to the eternal. To describe this, we say God is holy and transcendent.

So, if God is holy and transcendent over us, then faith is wonder and worship and mystery. Faith is not the sentimental singing of a folk song entitled "I Believe." Faith is bending the knee to the holy and transcendent God who created us and the world, and who has a purpose for us and the world in accordance with his holiness and transcendence. It is no accident that immediately after the verses in Exodus: "I am the Lord your God," there follow the Ten Commandments. "You shall not make yourself a graven image . . . You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. . . ." Faith in God begins with the bended knee in worship and wonder and adoration of his mystery which empowers us to a response of obedience to his commands.

But God is not only holy and transcendent in the Christian view. God is also present in his creation in the events of history to judge and to redeem, as he was present, incarnate, in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, to judge and to redeem. Listen to these words from the New Testament:

> "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. . . . "
> (John I:1-3, 14.)

Or these words from a very early Christian hymn:

> "Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped [held on to], but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:5-11.)

What do these words mean? They are but a few among many words in the New Testament used where the early Christians tried to interpret the impact of God's action in Jesus Christ upon them both as judge and as redeemer. His life and death and resurrection were a scandal and a stumbling block to them. On the one hand, he sought out the unloved and the unlovely, the sinner and the tax-gatherer, as people especially near and dear to God. On the other hand, he spoke harshly and critically of the Pharisees and the Scribes, people who were especially religious, who observed all the laws, attended all the services, were observed in all the right places. To one group, he was a redeemer. To the other, a judge.

Thus it is that when God comes into the depths of history to reveal to us his purpose and intention for man, he does not reveal himself as a big brother overlooking the foibles of men, nor as a granddaddy who yearns for our peace of mind or conformity to American standards of happiness and culture. Rather he is revealed as a judge and a redeemer. Faith, then, is repentance and forgiveness, an unexpected participation in the life of love. Through penitence, we see God's love standing behind his wrath and judgment. Through for-

giveness, we see God's love freely given and freely searching us out despite our sin. And this love constrains us to a life of obedience even though this obedience may not lead to success or worldly fame or make us a big business executive or a beauty queen. These may come and are not to be feared except in their power of temptation, but they are to be made servants of our deeper vocation of obedience.

Finally, God is not only holy and transcendent, high and lifted up, to whom by faith we bend the knee in wonder and worship; God is not only incarnate in his creation as judge and redeemer, in whom by faith in repentance and forgiveness we find our obedience; God is also Holy Spirit, present in the church throughout all history until history ends in the consummated Kingdom of God beyond death and earthly existence.

What is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is God in action. But notice: this is the Christian God we are talking about, not the God in any "Back to God Movement" where church attendance is the measure of faith. This is not the God of the peace of mind theologies where God is sitting on the edge of his seat waiting to do good things for you if you will only "get in tune with God and tell yourself at the start of each day, 'Another great day has begun . . . The formula for good days ahead is to pray hard, work hard, believe hard — and picture hard.' " * No, this God who is Holy Spirit is the God who is holy and transcendent over us, who comes incarnate in Jesus Christ as judge and redeemer, and who, as one of the great Christian Creeds puts it, is "His [Christ's] Holy Spirit." It is this action of God still at work in history that we call Holy Spirit.

If God is Holy Spirit at work through the church in the world, and the Holy Spirit is the spirit of Christ crucified, then faith is obedience to this Spirit in the decisions you make in your daily life as you seek to find the cross God has for you.

V

So we are back where we started. It is difficult to be a Christian when everybody is a Christian because nearly everybody in twentieth century America has a self-centered and self-rewarding understanding of what faith in God implies. We have been baptized into this cultural faith from our birth. But this kind of religion is an idolatrous religion worshiping a God that does not really exist. Over against this the God of the Christian faith is a God who is holy and transcendent, a really real God, to whom we can bend the knee in wonder and worship, as creature to Creator. The Christian God is a God of incarnate love, whose love is revealed to us as both judge and redeemer, to whom we can respond in penitence and acceptance of forgiveness. The Christian God is Holy Spirit at work with power in the world in the events of history made known to us through the church, to whom we can respond in trustful obedience whether for success or failure, for being in a sorority or fraternity or not being in one, for life as a scholar or life as a businessman, for good or for ill as life comes to us.

Does this faith that is wonder, that is penitence, that is obedience make you a Christian? No, it will only make you start becoming a Christian. There are no Christians, says Kierkegaard. There are only people who are "becoming Christians." But even here, you have to make the decision.

Will you? Do you?

* Norman Vincent Peale in *Time*, November 1, 1954, page 68.

Meditation Upon Reading a Poem on a Kite in Flight

(See The Pulpit, November 1960)

The cross is carried
high
on the back of
colored paper;
sermon manuscripts
filled
with the winds
of heaven.

THOR HALL

Prayer

Lord, intervene.
Inject
Thy will between
That which we mean
And do. Slip thy creative hand
Between cause and effect,
So that we do not deflect
Thy purpose which we seldom understand.
Save us from danger, sin,
Death and the evil one.
When this is done,
Then save us from ourselves, the harder task!
What we so wrong begin
Make right before the end.
Straighten the rod we bend,
Whether we ask or know not how to ask.

EDITH LOVEJOY PIERCE

Wanted: A Theology of Preaching

By Conrad Harry Massa

IN THE history of the church preaching has been neglected, ignored, debased, even almost totally forgotten, but never has its place been as seriously questioned by those who are genuinely concerned with the vitality of the church's witness as has been done repeatedly in this century. Nevertheless, when one looks at the number of books on homiletics which have poured out of the publishing houses of the United States and Great Britain in this twentieth century (sometimes self-consciously offering in the preface a reason why "another book on homiletics" should be printed), one cannot help but be amazed that so few come to grips with basic problems in a realistic and total way. Far too often they have pointed to one or two problems which faced preaching and resolved them in some general terms which left the reader as confused as ever about ultimate questions. Others simply made the same unexamined affirmations about the primary place of preaching, or they treated preaching from the "how-to" point of view with little, if any, recognition of the tremendous necessity for a man to know *what* he is doing before he can make real use of "how-to" knowledge.

Exhortations about the place of preaching in the pastor's work, with its untested presuppositions, may go by unquestioned in seminary days, but the harsh reality of the contemporary parish situation soon makes the formula of "one hour in the study for each minute in the pulpit" seem utterly visionary, not to say absurd. Even if the possibility for such time were there, why give it to preaching? Why should preaching monopolize such a disproportionate amount of the pastor's time? These are the honest questions of perplexed preachers.

Surely we have come a long way from the time (1909) when H. H. Henson could begin his Lyman Beecher Lectures at Yale with the assumption, "Preaching may perhaps be described as the principal function of the Christian minister."[1] Indeed we can begin our lectures on preaching today with the definite assumption that preaching is *not* the principal function of the Christian minister." The best evidence for this comes out of the studies on the ministry which are being carried out in our day. It is now established that most "preachers" do not give their preaching work the major amount of their week's work-time. Administration and counseling — the meetings and bleatings of the flock — admittedly take more of the parish minister's time. And one study has revealed that a certain group of ministers give more daily time to stenographic work than to sermon preparation!

Now and then one hears a minister comment that he "would like to give more time to preaching," if only he could. Is there not at least some truth, however, in the expectation that a man usually *finds* time for what he considers his urgent and crucial tasks? Is "time" really the problem, or is it an inadequate understanding of the minister's various tasks? Ministers may often be confused, distraught, frustrated, but they are trying, and usually trying in the best way they understand, to fulfill their ministry. But what is that ministry? It is not primarily a preaching ministry anymore! Oh, to be sure, every man charged with a congregation still preaches and must preach at least once a Sunday. But this is not his great function; it is but one of his tasks. And, it must be admitted, many ministers do not seem disposed to make it a very significant one.

All of this points to one inevitable conclusion: *the Protestant minister today does not have an adequate theological understanding of the nature*

CONRAD HARRY MASSA, *an ordained minister of the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., is assistant professor in homiletics, Princeton Theological Seminary, from which institution he received his B.D. and Th.D. degrees. Dr. Massa has recently accepted a call to the pastorate of Old First Presbyterian Church, Newark, New Jersey and will take up his duties there this spring. In this article, Dr. Massa points to the minister's need for an adequate theological understanding of the nature and purpose of preaching.*

[1] *The Liberty of Prophesying* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1910).

and purpose of preaching. If, therefore, he makes, implicitly, his own pragmatic test for the various functions he is called upon to perform, who can criticize him for his decision that the gospel can be articulated and communicated more effectively through his administrative and pastoral work than it can through his preaching? At least he can see results more quickly and more obviously in groups at work or study and individuals guided and helped than he can see any effective results from his work as a preacher.

The problem of arriving at a theologically adequate understanding of the nature and purpose of preaching is a complex one — made doubly so by the existence of oft-reiterated, but too pat, general definitions. "Preaching is the proclamation of the word of God" (or "of the gospel"). And everyone agrees — which means that we really have not said anything until specific meaning is given to the crucial terms "proclamation" and "Word of God." And *then* everyone no longer agrees! Until these terms are defined we do not have any kind of specific working definition of preaching. The sad thing is that these two crucial terms for the understanding of preaching have never been given specific interpretations which could be integrated into one specific working understanding of the nature and purpose of preaching.

Doctrinal theology has given us exhaustive inquiries into the "doctrine of the Word of God." It has never given us a "doctrine of proclamation." Indeed, doctrinal theology has always been somewhat embarrassed by the existence of rhetoric in any of its forms. It has thereby permitted itself an almost exclusively content-centered definition of preaching. But preaching is an action, and it is time that theologians faced the unpleasant and rather startling realization that in the whole history of homiletical literature from Augustine to Blackwood, with only certain exceptions, *the specific working aims of this activity of preaching were not taken from theologians but from pagan rhetoric!* The aims of Christian preaching enunciated by Augustine, in Book IV of his *On Christian Doctrine,* were the aims of Ciceronian rhetoric, "to teach, to please, and to persuade." These aims have been picked up, repeated, and sanctioned by homileticians ever since. In 1937, Andrew Blackwood was still giving Cicero's aims as a good statement of the aims of Christian preaching.[2] Edwin C. Dargan summarized this homiletical history when he observed: "Homiletical theory, both in its origin and in its development, is the application of accepted principles of public speaking to the particular ends and demands of the Christian gospel."[3]

Of course the homiletician had to "christianize" this rhetorical framework so that preaching would be distinct from other forms of public speech which, after all, had the same rhetorical aims. What differentiated preaching, as homileticians saw it, was the particular content of preaching, the divine Word (either scripture or doctrine), and the person of the preacher as one called of God. It was the "called" preacher who, by using the Christian scriptures and theology as his content, could adapt the framework of pagan rhetoric for his purposes. The tragic distortions which this made possible have ranged throughout the history of preaching from bone-dry didacticism which thought to please and persuade by the sole appeal of logic, to the oratorical fireworks which sent a barrage of sounds crashing in upon the hearer to hide the squeak of a creaking thought-structure, to the persuasiveness of the "obvious sincerity" of the preacher.

There is no way to escape these distortions so long as we persist in thinking of preaching in terms of the rhetorical framework. If we approach preaching as a certain content to be taught (and this is where theology has played right into the hands of rhetoric), which content must then be made as pleasing and as persuasive as possible, we are caught in the stereotyped approach: exposition-application (of either scripture or doctrine) and the most weight will fall wherever the propensities of the individual preacher dictate. The modern preacher's questions hit at this whole framework of secular rhetoric. First, how good a teaching medium is preaching anyway? A Catholic writer has suggested that the Protestant sermon is pedagogically 400 years out of date! Secondly, how does the average fellow without a "knack for words" make the whole thing pleasing? Finally, who ever knows (or believes) that a sermon persuades anyone to do anything!

It is time we scrapped the rhetorical framework for preaching. It is time that we saw the impossibility of our situation in terms of its theological incongruity. The aims of rhetoric differ from the aims of preaching not simply because of the material used and the person speaking, but *in terms of the human possibility involved and in terms of the Divine possibility promised!* The basic aims of public speaking cannot be applied to the gospel, as Dargan suggests, because in the only sense in which "persuasion" and "edification" are *theologically* meaningful, they are the work of the Holy Spirit. It is for this reason that the doctrinal theologian looks suspiciously upon "style" in preaching. He sees it as a means to manipulate effects which are not within the preacher's possibility to insure, or even to aim at, as a rhetorician does and must. It is this which Karl Barth has seen and warned against whenever he writes about preaching.

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[2] *The Fine Art of Preaching* (New York: Macmillan, 1937).

[3] *The Art of Preaching in the Light of Its History* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1922).

If we can get rid of the rhetorical aims for preaching, we can eliminate the preacher's most damning frustration and source of misunderstanding about the nature and purpose of preaching — *the search for visible results!* This expectation, or even requirement, which makes preaching a means to an end by demanding that it validate itself through the number of souls saved or edified is the greatest burden the preacher has been forced to carry. Certainly true preaching *may* validate itself through the winning of souls to Christ, although we can never be sure how many such souls "won" are the result of conversion and how many are the result of persuasion — two entirely different things. But true preaching may also validate itself through the number of souls who do not respond or who turn away from Christ, although we can never be sure how many are turned away by the offense of the gospel and how many by the failure at communication — again two entirely different things. *Preaching does not fail to be valid Christian preaching by failing to persuade or edify; it fails to be valid Christian preaching by failing to be a true confrontation of men by God through the person of the preacher.*

Thus the preacher *must* live in a tension, not the tension of looking for visible results, but the tension involved in asking, "Is this God's Word for this moment?" And the most correct exegesis of a passage, or the most thorough exposition of a doctrine will not guarantee *that!* In this sense, every sermon is an end in itself, *an event,* as Donald Miller and John Knox recently, and the magnificent P. T. Forsyth in 1907, have emphasized. If we must use this means-end terminology, perhaps the best way to state it is that *the preacher's end is to be God's means at this moment* — not in terms of "results" which are God's to bring about, but in terms of God's confrontation of men which is why the preacher struggles to interpret the Word to the world.

However, this brings us to another aspect of this crucial point at which doctrinal theology has been of no help to the homiletician. Ridding ourselves of the rhetorical aims, as necessary as this is, is only treating the symptoms and not the basic malady. There was a valid reason why homiletics so quickly grasped the rhetorical framework for itself. Something had to protect preaching as *proclamation* to keep it from being lost in a concept of exposition which always tends to become didacticism. By emphasizing something more than and beyond "instruction," the use of rhetorical aims helped to emphasize the importance of the *hearer.* It was the *hearer* for whom the preaching event was taking place. But when have we ever had a definition, or a theology of preaching which made the hearer *central?* Never!

If we are to take seriously the matter of personal confrontation, then this personal confrontation must be made basic to our understanding of preaching, and preaching cannot be understood simply as "the exposition of scripture" unless this is qualified and expanded (as it always is in homiletics) to make certain that we understand that "exposition" includes "application." But why give an impression that the relationship to the hearer is an afterthought, or an expansion of a basic definition which can leave him out? Why not formulate a theology of preaching which *centers on the hearer* to be confronted *in terms of* the biblical text or theological doctrine? Certainly this is what is pointed to by theology's insistence on personal encounter, by biblical criticism's underscoring of the *Sitz im Leben,* and by modern education's reminder that we teach people, not material!

A theology of preaching which will make explicit and integrate our best understanding of the Christian Gospel in confrontation with the man of today through the person of the preacher is our crying need. Unless we understand that it is this confrontation which is basic, neither the correctness of the exegesis, the logical presentation of the doctrine, the ingenuity of the sermon outline, the conviction of the preacher, nor the "persuasiveness" of the whole presentation ultimately matter. Let the preacher live in the proper tension. In what Paul Lehman calls, in another context, "a redemptive tension." This cannot be the tension of the anxious expectation of results; it must be the tension which any mortal must feel when he becomes the field of encounter between his fellowmen and God.

One would agree with Barth that the preacher can never insure this encounter, but theology sorely needs to show us what part is played in this confrontation, not only by the content of the gospel, but by all the resources of language, and the behavioral sciences which, one is bold enough to suggest, may be some of the Holy Spirit's means, as well as ours, of communicating with men through the proclamation of the Word of God in the event of preaching.

Eclecticism

(Continued from page 3)

when what God has joined together is put asunder; what atoning power there is in the cross we bear and in the one that bears us; what unsearchable riches God has for us in his Christ. We are prodigal if we do not make the transfiguring lights of the arts, the sciences, the humanities — indeed of every usable thing in creation — play upon the Christ we present to our people. But it is none of these things that we offer for their salvation except Christ alone. The accent of the new reformation must be not only *sola fide* but also *solus Christus.*

— KYLE HASELDEN

In Dark Hours Let Us Not Sit Deedless, Like Fools and Fine Gentlemen

The Christian Way in Race Relations

By Robert J. McCracken

THE question of race relations is at the very center of the world crisis. In importance and urgency it should be bracketed with the threat posed to civilization by the manufacture of nuclear missiles. Recently a British news writer, commenting on the problems besetting his country in Kenya, predicted that if Western democracy continued to be based on the supremacy of the white man, that in itself might well be the precipitating cause of World War III.

In the nineteenth century the whites established an ascendancy over the peoples of Asia and Africa. Almost everywhere in some degree they abused their power. Now the subjugated peoples are striking at their shackles, are filled with a fiery zeal for freedom from oppression, fear and want, for political freedom, for a better life. This may prove the most significant revolution of our age. Its implications for the future are becoming more and more apparent every day.

Nowhere have all the traditional alignments of power undergone so drastic a change in so short a period as in Africa. Whites there are haunted by the perpetual fear that the blacks may bring their ascendancy to an end. It is certain that that is going to take place, for it is inconceivable that two and a half million whites can hope permanently to mold Africa with its population of two hundred million to their pattern. This can only be done by subjugation and the subjugated peoples are in revolt, with communists ready to inflame and exploit them. Pandit Nehru has said that the African problem is perhaps the most fundamental problem in the world today because it is the central issue of race relations, and because, in consequence, the question of whether the next war will be a war between colored and white people may be decided by policies pursued in the African continent.

With the aspirations of the African and Asian peoples Christians are bound to sympathize. Many of them have done more than sympathize. Christian missionaries in preaching the gospel and in teaching Christian truth in their schools have bred and nourished those aspirations. Blantyre in Nyasaland, was the scene of an uprising. It is not a fortuitous circumstance that Blantyre, deriving its name from David Livingstone's birthplace, is a long established center for missionary work carried on by the Church of Scotland. Ministers and elders of the Scottish church have been vigorous in protesting the wrongs done in British dependencies in Africa. How could they do otherwise? There is no contemporary issue about which Christian principle is clearer than the issue of race relations.

That in the matter of race relations Christian principle and practice are often at variance is part of the tragedy of our times. The two countries where creed and conduct clash most are South Africa and the United States. More than any other factor their record in race relations discredits Christianity in the eyes of Asians and Africans. It is *the* objection repeatedly raised when Christianity is commended to them. American visitors, when traveling in the Far East, seem always to be encountering people sensitive to the race problem in the United States and raising questions concerning the way Negroes, Indians, Chinese, Japanese, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Jews are treated in this country. The communists, minimizing our strengths and the notable and striking advances of the last decade, make the most of our shortcomings in this area.

With race relations the crucial issue of these days, the Christian pulpit must spell out time and time again the Christian principle. The world has no common conviction about which its life may unite and cohere. It has forgotten, it has still to realize, that down below race, class, color there is

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As this sermon pointedly declares, the issue of race relations is at the center of the world crisis. That issue is being fought out not only in distant Africa and Asia but also in our own land. The Christian conscience cannot be indifferent to this problem and the Christian pulpit must not be silent.

a fundamental fact which is universal and everywhere the same. God is the Creator of all men. All men are equal in his sight. He cares for all men equally and intends that men should live in community with one another and love their neighbors as themselves. Racism is an affront to the native dignity of man and an insult to God. Think of Christ's parable of the Good Samaritan and the point of it; think of his attitude to the Samaritans, Greeks, Romans who crossed his path. Before his searching gaze racism cannot go unchallenged. A new world order is being built in our generation. In it whites will not be in the majority. They are less than a third of the world's population. The church of Christ will forfeit any moral right to leadership unless it stands unequivocally by its God-given gospel and declares that *all* men are made in "the image and likeness of God," and that in consequence each *person* is of infinite and eternal value.

Time and time again the Christian pulpit must spell all this out. But preaching is not enough. The proclamation of principle is not enough. Practically all the denominations in this country have passed resolutions in support of integration. Resolutions help in creating a climate of opinion and a conscience, but resolutions in themselves do not change race relations. There is ample evidence that they have little effect on local congregations. The rank and file of church people have yet to discover the real outreach of their responsibility to minority groups.

In the resolutions passed by church boards there is much talk about the churches "building bridges of understanding" around the world. That is a splendid vision and our Christian duty. Brotherhood, however, begins on a person-to-person basis at home. Without some practical manifestation, without deeds backing up words, it is idle talk. Christian relations with people whose color and class are not our own have to be cultivated here in the United States, in *this* state, in *this* city, in *this* neighborhood, in its housing, its schools, its clubs, in your job in shop or office. Louis Adamic, the author, charged, "On this point, most American Christians as such are frauds. The best that the best of them can do is to be tolerant." Something much more positive and dynamic than tolerance is needed. Tolerance may not issue in action. It may not take one step towards an improvement of race relations. What is required in our pluralistic society is acceptance, association, co-operation, joint undertakings.

Putting Christian principles to work — that is our task. The number of Christians who reject the myth of racial superiority is growing, but far too many find some reason why in their particular situation it is not possible or expedient to worship or work or associate with minority groups. The churches would materially assist the state in its attempt to establish integration if more of their members were willing and eager to act like Christians towards their brothers of another color. About the remedying of some social problems we feel well-nigh helpless. They are so complex and vast; there seems so little that one individual can do. The encouraging feature of race relations is that it is an issue about which every Christian can do something, beginning where he lives, works, worships. Committing himself to belief in an unsegregated church and an unsegregated society, he can conform his personal, family, business and religious life to his belief. He can cultivate contacts and friendships with members of other races. He can invite them to his home and visit theirs, can press for the right to invite them to his club and golf course; Christian race relations begin in these immediate person-to-person contacts.

Beyond such contacts there is the challenge of the community. The evils of discrimination and segregation are mitigated through neighborhood self-surveys, interracial conferences, social action undertaken jointly by citizens — Protestant, Catholic and Jew — by churches and synagogues, by colleges and hospitals. Association and co-operation break down the emotional barriers among races from which discrimination springs. Work can then be done for the enactment and enforcement of fair employment practices, of the right of every person to acquire housing on the basis of personal preference and financial capacity without regard to race, religion or national origin. Churches and individual Christians square their practice with their profession when they recognize their responsibility for creating and maintaining the racially inclusive character of their communities. Of their communities *and their churches.* A Christian church should strive to make its fellowship inclusive of all types of folk. It is the weakness of Protestantism that its churches by and large are socially restricted. When the emphasis is on congeniality and sociability, membership confines itself almost automatically to one class, culture and color, and comprehensiveness is lost. Every church of Christ is intended to be a house of prayer for all of God's children.

What motive is strong enough to bring all this about, to spur us to live up to what we profess? H. N. Brailsford, pleading that the African be given the opportunities and rights which are his due, asks: "Why should we do that? Because we believe that sound economics point this way? Because we think that in the long run our own interests will be served? Never. Men who have no hotter fire than that in their bellies will stammer and wilt and yield, as soon as the battle looks doubtful. We shall do it for backward peoples and do it at some cost to ourselves, only if our motive is brotherly love. Whether we think of them as our fellow workers, or as our fellow men,

it must be a warm impulse of fraternity that drives us to defend them and to aid them. If we have in us the faith and the love this great adventure demands, we shall succeed. If we lack this principle of action then our plans are a dreary intellectual exercise and nothing more." * That from a journalist. It is precisely where the Bible puts the emphasis. "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." "If any one has this world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Let us put our love not into words or into talk but into deeds and make it real."

* H. N. Brailsford, "Socialists and the Empire," in *Fabian Colonial Essays* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.).

In what is happening around the world, in what you see in your city and in your community, do you not hear God calling you to active participation in an enterprise that cuts across all dividing lines of culture, color and class? The most crucial field for the extension of the Kingdom of God in America today is the interracial church.

Said William Morris, "If these hours be dark at least do not let us sit deedless, like fools and fine gentlemen, thinking the common toil not good enough for us and beaten by the muddle; but rather let us work like good servants trying by some dim candlelight to set our workshop ready against tomorrow's light."

The Agony of the Southern Minister

Mistakes I Have Made in Race Relations

By William O. Byrd

Proverbs 3. Matthew 7.

I HAVE a confession to make. I must confess mistakes I have made in race relations. Mistakes of omission and commission. Will you hear my confession, please?

My first mistake was to be born in this time. Perhaps in the dear dim days beyond recall I would never have faced the problem, but I picked the wrong century in which to be born. I shouldered my wrinkled way into this world in 1916. I was weaned during *the* war, that shining crusade to make the world safe for democracy. Now, after forty-four years, with another World War and a Korean "police action" (strange — the casualties are just as dead whether we call it war or not) we are threatened with nuclear holocaust. This one, if it comes, may be the war to end all worlds, at least as we know them. Now the question is to make our much proclaimed but much less practiced democracy safe for the world.

And in such a world, shrunken into neighborhood by jets and our communication media, we must have brotherhood; we must act "Thy kingdom come" or we shall be blown to kingdom come. There is no place to hide.

This is a world in which Little Rock can be hissed by Indians in Peru and by Africans in the Congo. I have heard that hiss and I know that "no man is an island, no man lives alone."

And this is my sin, my mistake; for to be born in a time such as this is to know that I am a part of a world in which Little Rock and all the other symbols of man's inhumanity to man are possible. And I cannot ignore it, nor live with it comfortably any longer:

> "The time is out of joint;
> O cursed spite,
> That ever I was born to set it right!"

Who? Me? Reared on beautiful words; "World Safe for Democracy," "Four Freedoms," "United Nations," on these was I nourished. And I believed them, for the time demands belief. That

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was my first mistake in race relations. Hear my confession, please!

It was a mistake to be born of my particular parents. I should have chosen more wisely. They were of Scotch-Irish stock, with the sturdy Protestant faith. Rather ordinary, yet amazingly good and independent people, driven by an unrelenting Puritan conscience.

My "Mom" (bless her) really believed and loved everybody. She could master the stately language of the King James Version of the Bible, but she never did learn how to pronounce the simple word, "Negro." To her dying day she called them "Nigras," with a Mississippi accent, and loved them "in their place" with all of her Scotch-Irish heart. "Pop" was more lenient in law, if not in love. In fact, he could "bend" the law when it got in the way of his Scotch (and I don't mean blood). But others knew and understood and joined him in saying, "don't sell it to the Nigras — they can't handle it like us Southern gentlemen."

But both of them, Mom and Pop, taught me to know the virtues of honesty, fair play, and respect for others. I was warned never to cheat, not even a "Nigra"; never to take advantage of another, not even a "colored child"; and never to talk back to my elders, not even a "Nigra mammy." They saw that I attended Sunday school and that I learned to sing:

"Jesus loves the little children, All the children of the world,
Red and yellow, black and white, They are precious in His sight,
Jesus loves the little children of the world."

And I sang the words and I believed them and that was my mistake. Hear my confession, please!

It was a mistake to be born in this particular country. No man who wants to remain exclusive should ever select America as the land of his birth. Even deep in Mississippi, that "Magnolia Jungle," and later in Louisiana, the growing mind of a child could not help but be aware of the breath of freedom. For in those days, before the citizens came to their senses and gave their schools to the tender "protection" of the governor, a growing boy could hear such exciting words: "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable rights. . . ." And they told me that in America it was true and I believed them and that was my mistake.

Of course, I should have known better, for "Bubba," my almost constant playmate away from home and along the riverbank, wasn't in *my* school. His skin was darker than mine even when mine was dirty with Mississippi mud. But I ignored that and I believed the teachers because, you see, I really *wanted* to believe those beautiful words.

It was a mistake to be reared in a small southern town. Perhaps here was where I really went wrong. No one, not even Mom, thought it strange to have me play during the hot summer days with Bubba and his friends, or to have "Aunt Cindy," Bubba's mother, walk with us across the hot pavements to buy penny candies for all, share and share alike, *not* separate, *but* equal!

For years I did not know that I was "better" and that while we could sit side by side on the curb and eat our candies, Bubba must never, never sit down in the house. And yet they said: "Son, always play fair, always be honest. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." And I believed them and that was my mistake.

Of course, I *am* grateful for one saving grace. I could not join the Boy Scouts (my folks couldn't afford the uniform, they said) and so I never had to unlearn all the "impractical" words of the Scout Law. But my friends did and they said they believed them and that was *their* mistake.

So my sins pile up. Time would fail to tell them all. The tragic mistake I made, as a product of such a background, when I chose my life work, the ministry of a man named Jesus. How could I be comfortable any more, bothered by the words: "God so loved the world (and nothing about it being a black or white world) that he gave. . . ." "Come unto me, all ye. . . ." (who are white? or Southern?) "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these . . . (the least rich, least educated, least white?) ye have done it unto me." So on and on, the demanding, impossible ethic of Christ. And I try to escape it and cannot and that is my mistake.

That ministry carried me into the army chaplaincy of World War II, to stamp out the last great prophet of "the Master Race" (that is, before Faubus, Eastland and their company). And deep in the Hurtgen forest, in the Belgium Bulge, I watched a Roman Catholic doctor give captured German blood plasma to a Southern Negro American rifleman and I looked as the Jewish medic assisted the doctor by cleaning the stump of what had been the Negro's leg. And the clean white teeth flashed up and demanded, "Look at it, my blood, it's *red,* you bastards!" And somehow it didn't sound like profanity at all, more like the echo of a Holy Book that says something about "He hath made of one blood all men to dwell upon the earth. . . ." And I saw and I believed and that was my mistake. For back at home the little hitlers, the supermen, still shout their patriotism and measure it by the hate they can arouse to insure elections.

Even so, I made a greater mistake. For I believed that when we saw what race hate could do in Dachau and Buchenwald and on a thousand battlefields that the people who call themselves Christian would never rest until the big, beautiful words were translated into flesh. I turned to the church, the fountainhead of all these great Judeo-

Christian truths men hold to be self-evident. And there in spite of the agony of many sensitive ministers and laymen, too often the church (or rather the caricature we make of his Holy Body on earth) became molded and shaped by pious prattle, mouthing its love of the Supreme Law Giver and Lover of all life while dragging behind the Supreme Court in human relations. Publicly it could pass great resolutions yet privately pass the word along, "Don't rock the boat, keep everybody happy, say nothing controversial, but say it beautifully." And the greatest of crimes is to offend one of these not least but loudest councils.

And I wonder if we ministers and members have become "killers of the dream" in our futile desire to avoid the cost of awakening. Aren't we haunted by the hymns we sing: "In Christ there is no East or West, in Him no South or North" and "Dear Master in whose life I see All that I would be fail to be . . ."? And I awake in the night to ponder the words of the noted Ralph McGill, editor of the *Atlantic Constitution* as he writes about "The Agony of the Southern Minister." And I know the agony of which he writes, of the pressures brought to bear, of programs blocked, of silent curtains. And I know the truth of seeing my fellow ministers and my people being haunted by the presence of our brother whom we deny. We sing: "Faith of our Fathers, living still" and we try to believe it and that is our mistake. Hear my confession, please.

But the greatest mistake of all, the most terrible confession I must make (and here *you* must join me at the confessional), *our* greatest mistake was to teach the Negro that we believed this heritage of ours, this Judeo-Christian faith in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. And, believing, we find ourselves bound whether we like it or not in unbreakable ties.

For the Negro *is* my brother, whether I like it or not, or whether I ever choose to act like a brother to him. He is *my* brother, for God *our* Father called him to life even as he did me. He chose him and me and you to be born in this particular time, of our particular parents, in this particular land, to live as one people before him. And, whether I turn to ancient Proverbs (1 — 3) or to a later prophet (Matt. 5 — 7) I am reminded that it is not *my* opinion that counts but the inescapable judgment of God our Father. *We* have made the terrible mistake of teaching the Negro these truths; so now it is the Negro who has the ultimate weapon which they provide: nonviolent love. Against such there is no defense.

So I confess. I am hurt and puzzled and bewildered. This is my dilemma: my whole lifetime, country, family, community, school, church, have taught me to be a brother. But now they say I cannot act as a brother must act! Can I believe them? Hear my confession, please!

A Prayer

ALMIGHTY GOD, we praise thee because we know thee, and bless thy holy name for all those ways through which men have found thee. In the long ago thou didst enable men to see thy handiwork in the heavens and to recognize the bounty of earth as thine. Thou didst call them to the contemplation of their own lives and the histories of nations, and therein they discerned thy judgments; amidst the agonies of war and the blessings of peace alike they beheld the outworking of thy laws of righteousness and justice. When they were released from bondage they came to acknowledge thee as Deliverer; as the darkness of their minds was dispelled they knew that knowledge and art come from thee; in the adventurous discoveries of seas and continents, amidst storms and sunshine, they came to declare the earth is the Lord's and all the seas are the seas of God. Yes, even out of the midst of despair and degradation, men have looked up from their sin and beheld the Christ and known that through him thou wilt be our redeemer and the world's redeemer if men will but trust thee.

Surely, O Lord, in many ways thou hast provided for us a saving knowledge of thyself. Yet we live as if we did not know thee. We betray our trust in thee and our fellowman. We become content with ignoble ways, and measure man's possibilities by average performance and median manners instead of by thyself in whose image we are made. Instead of seeking thy will for us, we seek only personal advantage for self, or family, or for our own kind alone. And constantly, O Lord, we say that thou art not because we have sought thee where thou art not.

Instead of the truth of the gospel we proclaim a gospel of truth, and when our science does not disclose thee we forget thee.

Instead of the goodness of the gospel, we proclaim a gospel of goodness, and when we fail as men do fail to achieve righteousness we become cynical.

Instead of the beauty of the gospel, we proclaim a gospel of beauty, but when beauty as we are able to fashion it does not contain thee, we forget that thou art God and hast thine own beauty of holiness which we should seek.

Visit us again, O Lord, and teach us where we may seek thee. May we pray as Job, O that we knew where we might find thee that we might come into thy presence. But as we pray, Our Father, we know that thou wilt come into our presence, and that whenever we do lose thee, thou dost find us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. — *W. Barnett Blakemore, dean of Disciples Divinity House and associate dean of Rockefeller Memorial Chapel, University of Chicago.*

The Incredible Assumption

By Huston Smith

ONE hears on all sides that the conflict between science and religion is over. For four centuries the battle has raged: in astronomy over the earth's position in the universe; in geology over the earth's age; in biology over the evolutionary hypothesis; in psychology over Freud's right to peep and botanize into man's soul. Bitter the struggle has been, and long. Yet (so runs the tale) it has achieved its purpose. Resolution has been secured, concord established. Councils of bishops now speak of scientists as having a religious obligation to follow the truth wherever it leads, and scientists, rejecting the Comtian thesis that religion is to be superceded by science, are busy in institutes for religion in the age of science. Occasionally a bible-belt college shows bad form by refusing to allow evolution to be taught, or a Jesuit priest writes an eyebrow-raising book on the phenomenon of man. But these are exceptions. Concord and good fellowship are the orders of the day. Is truth not one, and are not science and religion but two complementary approaches to it?

A newcomer to the lines may be permitted a demur. The experience of teaching religion in one of the leading scientific institutions of our time has led me over the past two years to see the matter in a somewhat different light.

It's true, of course, that the *former* battles are drawing to a close. Copernicus, Darwin, Freud, geology and Genesis are no longer the war cries they used to be. But the fact that certain battles have run their course is no guarantee that a general armistice has been signed, let alone that a just and durable peace has been established. I, for one, suspect that we are still a long way from the day when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together and members of the academic community will be able to sit, each under his own disciplinary vine and fig tree, without tension.

As I shall be saying some things about science in the minutes ahead, it is important that I interject a waiver. The fact that I happen to be in the employ of an institution polarized around science should be taken to mean no more than that. A British statesman once confessed that his knowledge of mathematics stopped with a desperate finality just where the difficulties began. I could easily paraphrase that statement in the present context. Having received my basic education in an inland Chinese village, most of the science I know came from the *Book of Knowledge,* vintage around 1917 as I recall. My colleagues have given me to understand that things have changed a bit in the interval. I know almost no science. Nevertheless, it is impossible to teach at a place like MIT without encountering certain winds of doctrine, and in the course of the months I have been there a vision of the program on which science is embarked has begun to take shape in my mind.

It has four parts.

First, we shall create life. This isn't going to take much longer. In a rudimentary way, we have almost achieved this breakthrough already.

Second, we shall create minds. At this point we are likely to suspect a gigantic finesse, but no matter: cybernetics, univacs, analogue computers — the analogy between the mind and thinking machines is being pressed to the hilt.

Third, we shall create adjusted individuals via drugs, chemistry, tranquilizers, and the multiple pills that can influence our psychological states directly.

Fourth, we shall create the good society via "behavioral engineering," subliminal and otherwise.

I hasten to insert two qualifications. I have not heard any scientist list these four objectives together as parts of a single program, and there

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HUSTON SMITH *was born in Soochow, China of Methodist missionary parents. At 17 he came to this country to attend college and was graduated from Central College, Fayette, Missouri and received the Ph.D. degree from the University of Chicago. In 1956 he was appointed the first professor of philosophy at Massachusetts Institute of Technology since the early days of the Institute. He accepted the appointment, he said, because it "offers an unparalleled opportunity to tackle, head on, the problem of closing the gap in understanding which has developed between scientific and humanistic components of our culture." This sermon was given by Dr. Smith at Rockefeller Chapel, the University of Chicago, in May, 1956, and again, later in the year, before a New Hampshire University audience.*

are many top scientists who don't trust any of them. But the basic point stands. Each of the four parts of this emerging program commands not just the labors but the faith of some of our finest scientists. Last year I asked Professor B. F. Skinner of Harvard, the foremost experimental psychologist of our day, to come to my class to discuss the behaviorally engineered utopia he outlines in his *Walden Two* which my students had just read. In introducing him I said that I wanted the students to have major claim to his time during the hour but that I should like the privilege of asking the first question. *Walden Two* was published in 1948. Had his thinking changed in any significant way in the intervening decade? Frankly I expected Professor Skinner to introduce some qualifications: to confess that he had been somewhat younger when he wrote the book and a bit carried away by his enthusiasm, and that the whole matter was proving to be more difficult than he had supposed. His actual answer was the opposite. "My thoughts certainly have changed," he said. "This thing is coming, and it's coming faster than any of you in this room have any idea of."

It may be that my theology has been inadequately demythologized, but I don't personally see how this fourfold program can be squared with religion. To the extent that it is taken seriously, God is dead; to the extent that it becomes validated, God will be buried. Far from a thing of the past, the conflict between science and religion may be shaping up in proportions greater than any we have thus far known.

I have no wish, however, to pursue this prospect further this morning. Instead, I should like to reverse the drift I have followed up to this point. Having refused to cry peace where there is no peace, let me now ask whether science — whatever the conscious stance of its practitioners — does not in fact provide us with some clues as to what religion is essentially about.

What is the upshot of man's venture into reality by way of science? Brush aside the details of specific discoveries that are being reported at the rate of over two million a year and come at once to the point. From the theoretical point of view the basic upshot of science is that it has disclosed a universe which in its factual nature is infinitely beyond anything we could have imagined while relying on our unaided senses.

A routine recall of two or three well-known facts will make this abundantly evident. Light travels at the rate of 186,000 miles per second. That's about seven times around the world. Now take the time-span that separates us from Christ and multiply it, not 50 times, but 50,000 times, and you have the approximate time it takes a beam of light to move from one end of our galaxy to the other.

Our sun rotates around the center of our galaxy at a speed of 160 miles per second. That's fast; how fast we can perhaps appreciate if we remember how much difficulty we are having in getting rockets to attain a speed of seven miles per second, the speed needed if they are to make their escape from the earth's atmosphere. The sun travels roughly 22 times as fast as this escape rate, at which speed it takes it approximately 224 million years to complete one revolution around our galaxy. If these figures sound astronomical, we must remember that they are actually parochial, for they are confined to our own galaxy. Andromeda, our second closest neighbor, is one-and-a-half million light-years removed, beyond which the universe falls away abysmally, range after range, world after world, island universe after island universe. In other directions the figures are equally incomprehensible. Avogadro's number tells us that the number of molecules in four-and-a-half drams of water (roughly half an ounce) is 6.06 times 10^{23}. In case your math is a little slow, the sum is roughly 100,000 billion billion. It's enough to make one dizzy; enough to make the mind reel, and spin, and cry out for a stop. Nay, more. From the vantage of our ordinary senses the vision is incredible — utterly, absolutely, completely incredible.

Only it's true.

Now along comes an Isaiah, a Christ, a Paul, a St. Francis, a Buddha, along come men who are religiously the counterparts of Copernicus, Newton, Faraday, Kepler, and they tell us something equally incredible about the universe in its value dimension. They tell us of depth upon depth of value falling away from this visible world and our ordinary perceptions. They tell us that this universe in all its vastness is permeated to its very core by love. And that's incredible. I look at the newspaper every morning and say to myself, "It can't be." Yet in my reflective moments I find myself adding, "Is it, after all, any more incredible, does it any more exceed the limits of our normal human experience than what my scientific colleagues are saying in their sphere?"

Of course the scientists have the advantage here, for they can prove their hypotheses whereas values and meanings elude the devices of science as the sea slips through the nets of fishermen. But this only leads me to press the analogy between science and religion further. The factual marvels of the physical universe are not evident to the naked eye. Who, relying only on his own gross, unaided vision, could even suspect that electrons are circling around their nuclei at the rate of a million billion times a second. Such truths are disclosed to the scientist only through certain key perceptions, certain crucial experiments. The far-flung embroideries of science and the scientific view of reality are really based on a relatively small number of such experiments.

If this be true in science, why not in religion

likewise? If factual truth is disclosed not through routine perceptions but through key or crucial ones, might not this be the case with religious truth as well? The Lord appearing high and lifted up to Isaiah; the heavens opening to Christ at his baptism; the universe turning into a bouquet of flowers for Buddha beneath the Bo tree; John reporting, "I was on an island called Patmos, and I was in a trance"; Saul struck blind on a Damascus road. For St. Augustine it was the voice of a child saying, "Take, read"; for St. Francis a voice which seemed to come from the crucifix. It was while St. Ignatius sat by a stream and watched the running water and that curious old cobbler Jacob Boehme was looking at a pewter dish that there came to each that news of another world which it is always religion's business to uncover.

A final step in the comparison is needed. If the universe of science is not evident to our ordinary senses but is elaborated from certain key perceptions, it is equally the case that these key perceptions require their appropriate instruments: microscopes, Palomar telescopes, cloud chambers, and the like. Again, is there any reason why the same should not hold for religion? A few words by that shrewd and self-constituted lay theologian Aldous Huxley make the point well. "It is a fact, confirmed and reconfirmed by two or three thousand years of religious history," he writes, "that the Ultimate Reality is not clearly and immediately apprehended except by those who have made themselves loving, pure in heart, and poor in spirit." Perhaps such purity of heart may be the indispensable instrument for disclosing the key perceptions in which religion's incredible assumption is grounded. With the unaided eye a small faint smudge can be detected in the constellation of Orion and doubtless an imposing cosmological theory founded on this smudge. But no amount of theorizing, however ingenious, could ever tell us as much about the galactic and extra-galactic nebulae as can direct acquaintance by means of a good telescope, camera, and spectrascope.

I don't know in what direction such thoughts drive your mind. Mine they drive in the direction of God. But the word doesn't matter; it's the assumption itself that counts, or rather the reality to which it points. Just as science has found the power of the sun itself to be locked in the atom, so religion (by whatever name) proclaims the glory of the eternal to be reflected in the simplest elements of time: a leaf, a door, an unturned stone. And so, for this quasi-religious, quasi-secular age, these lines titled "White Heron" by John Ciardi:

> What lifts the heron leaning on the air
> I praise without a name. A crouch, a flare,
> a long stroke through the cumulus of trees,
> a shaped thought at the sky — then gone. O rare!
> Saint Francis, being happiest on his knees,
> would have cried Father! Cry anything you please
>
> But praise. By any name or none. But praise
> the white original burst that lights
> the heron on his two soft kissing kites.
> When saints praise heaven lit by doves and rays,
> I sit by pond scums till the air recites
> Its heron back. And doubt all else. But praise.*

* John Ciardi, "The White Heron," in *I Marry You* (Rutgers University Press, 1958). Used by permission of the author.

Thoughts on Preaching

✚ SEND your audience away with a desire for, and an impulse toward spiritual improvement, or your preaching will be a failure. — *Edward M. Goulburn*

✚ THAT is not the best sermon which makes the hearers go away talking to one another, and praising the speaker, but which makes them go away thoughtful and serious, and hastening to be alone. — *Gilbert Burnet*

✚ I WOULD have every minister of the Gospel address his audience with the zeal of a friend, with the generous energy of a father, and with the exuberant affection of a mother. — *Fénelon*

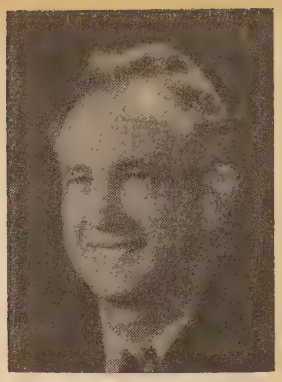
✚ TO PREACH more than half an hour, a man should be an angel himself or have angels for hearers. — *Whitefield*

✚ THEY cost me much thought and much strong emotion; but it was foolish to suppose that I could rouse my audiences in a little while to any sympathy with the temper into which I had brought myself by years of thinking over subjects full of pain. . . . — *John Ruskin* in the preface to *Sesame and Lilies*

✚ Get up freshly;
Open your mouth widely
Be done quickly. — *Martin Luther*

✚ WHERE the trumpet is expected, the flute will not suffice; and the flute, I fear, is the predominant instrument today in the orchestra of Institutional Religion — *H. R. L. Sheppard**

* From *The Impatience of a Parson*, Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., New York, 1928. Used by permission of Harper & Brothers.



Halves of One Another

By Edward W. Meury

Luke 10:25-37. Matthew 25:34-40.

MONTAIGNE, in his famous essay on America, describes the visit of three American Indians to the French court at Rouen during the childhood of Charles IX. The Indians gave it as their opinion that, in any good society, "men should be halves of one another" — and then went on to contrast this ideal with what they were seeing in France. "They had noticed that there were among us men filled and gorged with all sorts of good things; and that their other halves were beggars at their doors, emaciated with hunger and poverty; and they thought it strange that these needy halves could endure such injustice, and did not take the others by the throat, or set fire to their houses."

This is the truth that I want to place on your hearts and minds this morning: *man's essential solidarity and equality with his fellow man.* Our Scripture reading points up this truth in what is probably the best-known story in the world, the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

It all came about because a certain crafty lawyer tried to show off his intellectuality at Jesus' expense. He began with what seemed to be a simple, innocent question: "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus replied that salvation depended on two things: first, loving God with one's whole being — heart, soul, strength, and mind; and second, loving one's neighbor as oneself. Then the lawyer, who had planned this conversation like a general mapping a campaign, baited a trap for Jesus: "And who *is* my neighbor?" But Jesus refused the trap — instead, he told a parable, which he hoped would instruct the lawyer by giving him an opportunity to make his own judgment on a concrete situation.

This parable, as I said, is probably the most famous story in the world. Indeed, in a sense it is too well known, and so tends to become dusty in the mind, like a wall motto which we have looked at so long that it no longer registers. The story itself is simple. A certain man, traveling on a journey, is set upon, beaten, and robbed, then left beside the road, bruised and bleeding. Three men, each intent on his own affairs, come along the road, and see the wounded traveler. The first two — both pious men, one a minister, say, and the other a deacon of the church — look at him for a moment or two, then shrug their shoulders and continue on their way. But the third — a despised Samaritan, a man from the wrong side of the tracks — looks at him, and kneels down to help him. Which of these men (asks Jesus) was a good neighbor to the man in need? You know the lawyer's reluctant answer — and Jesus' admonition: *"Go and do likewise."*

Why can we intellectual and comfortable people in Wellesley not understand this admonition? Why *don't* we understand it, and take it to heart?

The scene now changes, though not greatly, from the road to Jericho to a fine street in Wellesley. The characters this time are (in addition to yourselves) a couple named Smith, who live a few houses from you down the street. You know them rather casually: you've met them several times at neighbors' houses for cocktails or dinner; you've played with Mr. Smith in a golf foursome a couple of times, and your wife has played bridge with Mrs. Smith. One day you meet him coming out on the 5:42 train, and you note signs of tension; but you shrug it off: *"Everybody* is under tension — we live a nervous life." A little later you hear a rumor: the Smiths are having trouble — it doesn't look as though they're going to make it. The Smiths, however, are proud people — they won't come and bleed on your living room rug; they won't even hint (consciously) that they need help. But you and they are still "halves of one another"; it is up to you to try — tactfully, of course — to do anything for them which your heart and imagination tell you may perhaps help them. For make no mistake about it: "Go and do like-

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wise" was not addressed only to the lawyer of the parable — it was addressed to you and me. Will we shrug off this situation, telling ourselves to mind our own business — or will we try to help? It is a winnowing question.

Or the situation may take the form of a letter from a young man in trouble, who turns to you in his groping for help, though he, too, is proud — almost too proud to ask. He has made a mistake and tells you so frankly. What will you do about it? It will be very easy to brush him off: you can tell him that it will be better, in the long run, for him to think his way through to a solution himself ("Just use your common sense — you'll come out all right!"). Moreover, why is he coming to *you* with his troubles — he's got a father, it's up to *him* to help the boy. Besides, his father might resent your coming into the picture if he should learn of it. And, after all, you're busy as the dickens right now! But think again: are these reasons, or excuses to let you go by on the other side? In spite of all these good alibis, isn't it just possible (isn't it even likely?) that it would help this boy mightily if you could bring yourself to share with him the wisdom that you garnered from a similar mistake you yourself made a long time ago? True, a talk like this might be a prickly thing to handle; but remember, you are "halves of one another." Do you dare not to *try* to help him?

Or the challenge may come with grey hair. This elderly woman isn't a part of your generation at all, she's a "senior citizen." "A nursing home is the best answer." It may be part of the answer; but there's more to it than that. What she *really* needs is friends, and a sense of being useful and needed, rather than the feeling that she is on the shelf. You and *she* are "halves of one another." Could you not contribute something to this situation?

These people whom I have been describing are "halves of one another." Halves of *us*. But they are nearby, right here in Wellesley; it doesn't take much creative imagination to deal with situations like these, given the will (even the "enlightened selfishness") to do it. But the *roads through* Wellesley lead *all over the world,* each presenting its challenge and its opportunity. One of the members of my current refresher course, for example, seemed very tired the other Sunday evening, and didn't have much to say. I spoke to him as he left the class: "You look tired — how are things going?" "Things are all right. I just flew in from Europe, and I haven't slept." I was sorry he was tired, of course. But what an opportunity, what a privilege, to be able to travel like that!

The roads taken by members of the Village Church, as a group, literally or figuratively span the earth. We can walk with Dr. Woodman and his wife in Angola. We see a Negro carrying another Negro, hardly more than a boy, on his back. We are shocked at the sight, because the young man has no feet. But we are "halves of one another" — so shall we not set ourselves to try to do something constructive here? Or shall we go by on the other side, hardly daring to look at the pitiful sight? We walk a road in Turkey, where our beloved longtime member Ruby Birge labors in the American Academy for Girls. Listen to these sentences from her letter of February 14, 1960. "For lack of two nurses and one doctor, one of our strategic areas will be lost. . . . Two of our schools need mature women to take over the boarding departments for three, and preferably five, years. . . . The shoestring budgets of your Near East institutions are not only tight, but taut and frayed to the breaking point." Then she ends with this sentence: "Will you tell my people of the Village Church about it?"

Do you begin to see that in the deepest sense we *are* "halves of one another"? The genius of the parable of the Good Samaritan is that it taught the lesson, for the first time in history, that men *could make themselves neighbors by the act of helping those in need.* Always before, the standard of neighborliness was cultivation of the right people —those of similar education and social standing to yourselves. Then, if those people got into trouble, you helped them — perhaps with an ulterior motive. If, however, the individual in need was beyond the pale, you might look at him — but you did not *see* him. Thus, the problem of neighborliness was then, and still is, an optical problem.

If and when we *do* dare to really *see* a person in need, then we *see Christ in that need.* What is our response when we see Christ in the hunger, the thirst, the nakedness, the homelessness — of men? Do we dare see Christ in the minorities that we do not want in Wellesley? Do we dare look long enough, and hard enough, at any particular, specific need to *see Christ inside that need* — to see Him suffering in our human suffering?

One Great Hour of Sharing reminds us of the joy that can be ours if we will open our eyes and our hearts. Just *one dollar* (impossible as that sounds) will provide *3,000 glasses of milk* for children overseas who would die of rickets without it. This is one of the glories of the jet age — that we can share our abundance with the needy as could no other age in human history. We can set our feet on almost any road that passes through Wellesley — to Angola, to Turkey, to Tanganyika — and see with the eyes of love the suffering of Christ on these roads. So when we make our offering, let us make it with imagination and tenderness and love and thankfulness for the opportunity to share.

Let us stop this everlasting rushing around. It is destroying us, without getting us anywhere that, in our best moments, we want to go. Let us realize that we are in very truth "halves of one another" — that thereby there may be hope again on the roads of the world.

THE MOURNERS BENCH

By G. Hobab Kish

THE idea of free worship is noble and important. That men should prefer to worship relevantly as well as traditionally, is sound. The stereotyped service that is the same yesterday, today, and forever, gets lifeless and perfunctory. Get some fresh air into the sanctuary and let the muted noise of the world steal under the door. I recall Sinclair Lewis referring to something as having an air of unreality such as one finds in saloons and churches. Let me add hurriedly that I know only about churches from first hand experience, but the comparison intrigues me.

Now freedom, my brethren, is hard to come by and harder to maintain. It slides out of our grasp and we put a cheap substitute called "informality" in its place. We justify our sloppiness because it is folksy. What am I talking about? Protestant worship services!

For one thing, too many times, our services have no sense of time. True, we are dealing with the affairs of eternity, but we do not come into the presence of God by frittering around in circles. Drama is the heart of the matter, and no man ever wrote a play that was effective without a sense of time. The monk has learned to meditate for an hour, but you will lose ninety per cent of the congregation with an empty thirty seconds. The man who knows how quickly things pass him by, will not be much impressed with a meandering performance that assumes time can be wasted in the sanctuary. Not hurry, mind you, but a sense of the precious use of the great moments is what we need. One hour, give or take five minutes, is long enough.

I heard a fellow take ten minutes for announcements which ranged all the way from a committee meeting on Monday night to a bake sale on Saturday afternoon. By the time he had finished, we were beyond his reach, and the Christian church had suffered another serious setback.

For another thing, so many services seem to have no purpose. The hymns are unsingable and the prayers are irrelevant. They never reach the human situation or the personal condition. The pastoral prayer is a mess, full of generalities, clichés and requests for what nobody really wants. The worse the choir, the more it sings and in the most inopportune places. Has this pastor ever asked what worship is or what we are there to do? And you can bet your last covered dish that the sermon will reflect the same purposelessness.

Finally there is no sense of direction. We keep circling around to rehash something already ended or we back up to recapture a mood which were better forgotten. The transitions are clumsy and the whole business is full of clashing gears. I tell you, a man leaves such an experience with his nerves on edge, and vowing to become either a Quaker or an atheist.

A Prayer of Dedication

LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

We come at this hour, O Lord, with grateful hearts. We come mindful of what gracious abundance thou hast conveyed to us, and of what incredible smallness we have returned to thee. We come begging thy tenderest blessings upon the expectancy of this moment. Hear our prayer, O Lord.

We praise thee O God, for the strength, stability, and fertility of the earth. Grant, we pray, that the enduring earth beneath and the steel beams above may betoken the strength of this building and of our love for thee; that the stability of these bricks and stones may in some small way indicate the firmness of our faith; that this bright and beautiful glass, filtering the light from the sun, may but reflect the enduring splendor of this sacred room and that of our holy bodies; and that all these may be instruments for the propagation of thy kingdom on this earth.

May thy rich blessings be upon all who have labored day and night, skilled and unskilled, with and without remuneration; even those who have given of time, talent, and treasure. But we do not ask to be judged, O Lord, by our feeble accomplishments or by our worthiness, rather we implore that according to thine interminable mercy, thou will accept these our paltry efforts and use all our works to the glory of thy holy name.

Lord, we humbly beg thee to accept this building; use it to thy glory; permeate it with thy grace; mold it in thy knowledge and, above all, sanctify it with thy presence. Moreover, we beseech thee, dear Lord, to renew it in thy peace, and uphold it with the right hand of thy ceaseless power.

Take this minister and people, Lord, replenish and reconsecrate them, that they might not grow weary. Support them, sustain them, and sanctify them for the crucial days ahead.

And now, Father, when all the perishable temples of this earth shall have been dissolved and our frail bodies shall have gone the way of all flesh, grant unto us a dwelling in that building not made with hands. Amen. — *George A. Sewell, dean-director, Turner Theological Seminary, Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta, Georgia on the occasion of the dedication of Allen Temple A. M. E. Church.*

Three Homilies

By Franklin D. Elmer, Jr.

I. It Says in the Bible

What the Bible says to Billy Graham, Dwight Eisenhower, Norman Vincent Peale, Albert Schweitzer or your back fence neighbor doesn't really matter. What does matter is what the Bible says to you. If it has a great message for you, then thank the Lord. If it says nothing to you, then start reading, Bud!

As for me, I find in the Bible the thrilling record of man's greatest quest for an understanding of himself and his relationship to the powers that created him. And out of the experiences of our early forebears, the Bible gives me hope, and confidence, and courage. I like this book! It is full of exciting adventures and events in the exploration of life and the whole great realm of ideas. It deals with the insights and frustration and triumphs of real flesh and blood people, and as I read it I find myself and my neighbors all over the place. We are longing to escape from some captivity in Egypt, we are wanderers in the wilderness, we are stoning the prophets or sitting on mountainsides as lonely prophets ourselves. We are eager for the healing of the Master's touch, and shy of accepting the responsibility it involves. We clamor for his crucifixion and then weep over his grave. We catch glimpses of his living spirit and make a mockery of it as we build our human frailties into the fabric of our churches. We dream great dreams of things we might do, and then postpone doing them with the flimsy excuse that this evil world must surely soon come to a cataclysmic end. We sing "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ . . ." and then we waste our substance on "baubles, bangles and beads."

Yes, this is our book, all right.

This Bible says to me that man is constantly changing — and that the changes can be definitely for the better. It is a long, long way from the day Abraham went up the mountain thinking he could win God's favor by sacrificing his own son, to the day when Jesus went to Calvary seeking not to save himself by the sacrifice of another, but to save others by his own sacrifice. There had been a revolution in the human spirit! The Bible says to me that I can help continue the direction of this revolution by my spirit and conduct.

The Bible says to me that man's ideas of God are constantly changing. I find in the Old Testament pictures of a pagan God who could one minute kill the armies of Pharaoh with the waters of the Red Sea, the next minute write with a fiery finger "Thou shalt not kill," and then, a few minutes later, himself wipe out the soldiers sent to capture Elijah. How good it is to know that our ideas of God can change. We prefer One who approves "Love your enemies," "Return good for evil," "Do good to them that hate you."

The Bible says to me that God and Man are partners in the great experiment of life on this tiny planet. This gives life tremendous meaning. We are not alone in our struggle for survival and our efforts to conquer the elements and discipline our impulses. Despite the cynics, this is not a hostile universe. We are here precisely because this is a friendly environment for creatures like us to live and develop in. And this is what Jesus was trying to impress upon us. In co-operation with God there is life for man — life with eternal implications.

II. He Treated the Boss — and Cured the Servant!

You should read this story and think about it every day for a week. It could make a lot of difference in your life (Matt. 8:5-13). This is one of the most remarkable "miracles" of Jesus. The Centurion came to Jesus pleading that Jesus might heal his servant who was "lying paralyzed at home, in terrible distress." Jesus cured the servant by treating the boss! In fact Jesus never even asked the Centurion what the symptoms of the servant's illness were. But Jesus did draw out the Centurion, and discovered that the Centurion was one of those arbitrary, power-hungry men of authority who expect people to jump to do their bidding. He said so himself. And as the Centurion discussed his own symptoms in the presence of Jesus he began to see himself in a new light. "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof." Note the comment by the gospel writer, "And the servant was healed at that very moment."

There is no reason to go into a deep discussion of psychological principles. To any one who has lived very long in this world the situation described above is obvious and commonplace. There are people who make you sick, too, aren't there? And don't you sometimes feel that your health would be much better if these people who make you sick could be treated by someone as adequate as Doctor Jesus? And isn't it especially sickening if you have someone like that for a boss? In fact isn't it true that some of your headaches, pains, grumpiness, and other illnesses could be cured if only the right treatment could be administered to a few other people?

Agreed. Now look at the other side of the situation. What is your effect on other people? Are there those who would be happier and healthier if the right treatment could be administered to you? What about the other people in your own home, for instance — or the folks you work with, or the neighbors on the other side of the fence? Do you make life healthier for those around you or do you make them "sick" just the way some people make you sick? Who would be cured if you were given the proper treatment?

This is no preposterous situation we are discussing. Remembering the famous boast of the industrial executive who shouted, "I don't get ulcers, I give 'em," let us put it down as true that we have a lot to do with each other's health. Why, you can even make one of your friends a lot sicker than he is already by being overly sympathetic. Hasn't it happened to you? Next time you begin feeling sorry for yourself, and wondering if you really aren't a pretty sick chick,

---

FRANKLIN D. ELMER, JR. *is pastor of First Baptist Church, Flint, Mich., and the editor of* Baptist Freedom, *a publication of the Roger Williams Fellowship of American Baptists. Dr. Elmer insists that though he writes short he preaches long. Here are three illustrations of homilies which in his pulpit expand into full length sermons.*

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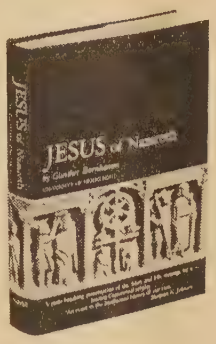

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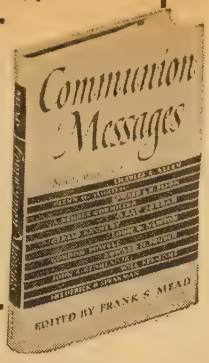

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just stop, before you surrender to your ills, and ask yourself, "Who is doing this to me?"

And by the same token, remember that you have in your personal little doctor's bag of drugs, some of the most powerful medicines in the world — for no pills are as potent as kindness, understanding, thoughtfulness, mercy, and forgiveness. And it is just possible that no doctor in the world could do as much for the good health of people around you as you can do yourself. It is always worth remembering that possibly the best cure for some of these who are close to you would be some treatments administered to you instead of them.

III. Who Are These Who Go Zoom, Zoom, Zoom?

Stand close beside one of our new superhighways, and listen to the cars go by — zoom, zoom, zoom. This is endless. Day and night it goes on, with cars roaring along at a steady pace of 70, 75, 80 miles per hour — or even faster, And if you have stopped for gasoline, or to eat your lunch, on the already obsolete Pennsylvania Turnpike where the restaurants, the parking turnoffs, and the gas pumps are much too close to the speeding traffic, it is frightening to think that you have just come out of this mad race yourself, and will be joining it again as soon as refueling is accomplished. The newer turnpikes happily permit you to get some distance away from the zoom, zoom, zoom when you stop for rest.

Who are these who go zoom, zoom, zoom? These are your restless fellow Americans, these are folks like you — this *is* you! Here goes the frantic generation, the unsettled ones, the creatures of this great modern day when going somewhere has become a substitute for getting somewhere. And behold with awe the chrome-spangled, be-finned wonders in which they do their "going." Many of these zoomers have more than half a year's salary invested in this speeding arrangement of glitter and glamor which can so easily become a crumbled casket of death. Why do we so often mortgage our future, and so casually risk our lives to add our zoom to the zoom, zoom?

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mplications, we spend billions of public money to build these vast socialized highways in order to guarantee continued profits from the millions invested in private enterprise manufacturing cars. And we do it so that we can get from here to there more easily and more rapidly. But why we want to get there — that is not of particular importance.

Basically, we all seek with desperation for meaning in life. Do we, perhaps, find some meaning in participating in the speeding roar of traffic? We hunger for a sense of accomplishment, the assurance that we are doing something very much worthwhile. Does the busyness of our days, which is echoed in the roar on the highways, give us the feeling of accomplishment? We yearn for security, the feeling of substantial foundations under our lives. Does the flashing chrome, and the towering fin, and the feel of power give us this? Perhaps there is another kind of highway we have too much neglected, to our own loss. There is one who still walks firmly upon it over the hills of history, saying even as he goes, "I am the way . . ."

PULPIT POST

(Continued from page 2)

the seminaries were still so far behind in this area as the above named article suggests.

Without sacrificing the many excellent practical articles, I would like to see something more on the specific field of methodology in homiletics.

WALTER R. HOBKIRK
Park Presbyterian Church
Newark, N. Y.

A Tart Comment On Professorial Levitation

SIR: Thank you for the excellent editorial on "The Bible and the Ballot" (Nov.). This to me was a sharp comment very welcome in a time of confusion and half truths.

Also thank you for the sermon by Bishop Palmer. There is something alive and pertinent about sermons by men who are pastors of churches that the professors never quite get. I would welcome more preaching from preachers and less from the professors. They are a fine lot but frequently their feet do not touch the ground.

And what shall I say about the thing that stirred me enough to attempt a letter? Professor Osborn did not rise "Up from Emancipation." He started low and went straight down into a valley of negative holiness. Please spare us such silly self-centered comments. W. H. Carruth said it for me in his poem, "Dreamers of Dreams":

Yet there's not much to do but to bury a man,
When the last of his dreams is dead.

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Book Reviews

THE PASTOR'S PRAYERBOOK. *By Robert N. Rodenmayer. Oxford. $5.00.*

A BOOK OF EVERYDAY PRAYERS. *By William Barclay. Harper. $2.50.*

DOES the public use of prayers prepared by others and made available through publication involve the minister in an ethical problem? With regard to the similar use of sermons there would be no doubt about the answer. The "lifting" of prayers is somewhat more ambiguous. In any case, a principle for guidance is indicated: the minister should ordinarily assume the discipline of writing his own prayers. The value of anthologies such as Robert N. Rodenmayer's, *The Pastor's Prayerbook,* lies in the linguistic richness, the variety of form and theme, and the depth of tradition in prayer which are made readily available to the minister for the stimulation of his own efforts. That value may be lost and the minister's personal effort defeated if a collection of prayers becomes simply a source, generously and uncritically used.

With this proviso, *The Pastor's Prayerbook* may be offered as an excellent thing of its kind: the sources are past and present, the themes and occasions are inclusive. In common with all anthologies, there is an unevenness in quality and an overlapping of material which a minister might already possess. Speaking personally, I think the price ($5.00) is excessive, and the inconvenience of having to search for the source of each prayer in *Notes* at the end of the book may be regretted. The indices of subject and authorship will prove helpful.

A Book of Everyday Prayers, by William Barclay, is intended to meet a deeper and more urgent need: guiding and enriching the devotional life of the individual Christian. To this end, many books have been written and published while few have come to the stature of Fosdick's *The Meaning of Prayer* or Baillie's *A Diary of Private Prayer.* William Barclay's book belongs in this league and is therefore highly recommended. Of particular helpfulness is the extensive essay on the meaning and practice of prayer with which the book opens. It removes misconceptions and instructs in basic principles. The exposition is followed by prayers and Scripture readings for thirty days; prayers for Sundays, festival occasions and for significant events within the home. A concluding chapter suggests Scripture readings for the entire year — a practical aid of undoubted value. The prayers, of course, are the compositions of the author and are notable for chasteness of language, penetration of thought, and a sure insight into the problems and aspirations of the Christian spirit. *A Book of Everyday Prayers* is one which ministers will want to commend to parishioners who ask for help in prayer: a matter concerning which there is often more exhortation than usable suggestion. — *Charles C. Knapp, The First Baptist Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.*

THE VOICE OUT OF THE WHIRLWIND: THE BOOK OF JOB. *By Ralph E. Hone. Chandler. $2.25.*

HERE is an unusual book for ministers who wish stimulation for a sermon or — better yet — series of sermons on Job. The volume contains the Book of Job in the King James Version; classical sermons on Job by Calvin, Kierkegaard, and Cardinal Newman; introductions to the Book of Job by five scholars, ranging from A. B. Davidson to Morris Jastrow; essays, drawings, and poetry on Job by Francis Bacon, William Blake, Goethe, Josiah Royce, Carlyle, and Robert Lowth; evaluations of *J.B.* and Job by Samuel Terrien, Reinhold Niebuhr, *Life* magazine, Archibald MacLeish, and others; modern dramatic adaptations of Job by Thornton Wilder and Robert Frost.

What finer array of materials would a minister want for starting a series of homilies on Job! Though this collection is intended primarily for college classes, it should certainly have equal use in a clergyman's study. Highly recommended. — *Thomas S. Kepler, Graduate School of Theology, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio.*

GOD AND HISTORY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. *By Harvey H. Guthrie, Jr. Seabury. $4.25.*

THE author of this volume, a teacher of Old Testament at Episcopal Theological Seminary, Cambridge, Massachusetts, sees a philosophy of history as the main purpose within the Old Testament, a purpose which has vital relationship to the New Testament times and to the twentieth century as well. Rather than bearing witness to *truths about God,* the Old Testament is a history in which is expressed a faith that *God has revealed himself;* and this sovereign God is still working out his purpose in present history. The New Testament portrait of history naturally emerges from the Old Testament revelation; "That to which Christians bear witness, the life and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, gives meaning to the history that led up to it and to the history that followed it. . . . God had been at work in the coming of Jesus Christ because Christ was the clue to the significance both of the former things and the latter

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things." The church today must be a voice which bears witness to the world as to who God really is. Through an analysis and description of the J, E, P, and Deuteronomic strains of the Old Testament, the witness of God's revelation is traced through selected narratives and the law, then through the prophets, the "priestly synthesis," and the later writings, especially those of a wisdom and an apocalyptic nature. Simply but stimulatingly written, the volume is a fine spur for ministers to obtain afresh the long perspective of God's meaningful revealing of himself in the Old Testament drama and to discern its continuing meaning for us today. — *Thomas S. Kepler.*

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A Study of Hebrew Thought. *By Claude Tresmontant. Desclee Company. $3.75.*

THE primary concern of this book is to define the distinctive features of Hebrew metaphysics on which biblical theology is based. The author speaks throughout in metaphysical rather than in purely theological terms; therefore it would be incorrect to classify his book as an addition to the rapidly growing literature in the field of biblical theology. Nevertheless, he makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of biblical theology, and incidentally to the defense of the Christian faith.

His thesis is that there is a radical difference between Hebrew and Greek thought; a difference which at certain key points amounts to an irreconcilable contradiction. The starting point is the biblical doctrine of creation, where "Hebrew thought runs in a direction opposite to the current of Greek thought." Creation is the biblical answer to the metaphysical question of how the One can become many; whereas the answer of Greek thought, says the author, is in terms of "a degradation." According to Hebrew thought *time* must be understood in terms of a continuing creation, by which something new is continually being brought into being. In this continuing creation man becomes a cocreator with God. In its concept of the sensible world Hebrew thought emphatically rejects any form of dualism, such as a dichotomy of body and soul. Truth is manifested through the sensible, and through the particular: Abraham, a particular man; Israel, a particular people; the particularities connected with the incarnation. It is along this line that the author establishes a metaphysical line between creation and incarnation, and makes one of his most thought-provoking statements: "Dualism is the contradiction of the method of the incarnation" (p. 65).

We need not agree with every point the author makes in order to admit that this is a tremendously stimulating and worthwhile book. — *John P. Milton, Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.*

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Space-Age Sunday. *By Hiley H. Ward. Macmillan. $3.95.*

HILEY Ward, who has full theological training, is now religious editor for the *Detroit Free Press.* This book is a happy combination of dramatic, news-story style and scholarly research. His position as a newspaper man makes the author particularly conscious of the tensions that can arise over Sunday laws and the effort on the part of churches to see that they are passed and enforced. This volume will be found a valuable resource for any pastor, council of churches, or community that is faced with a problem growing out of Sunday sales.

The review of the four communities: Saddle River, New Jersey; Little Rock, Arkansas; Toronto, Canada; and New York City, which faced litigation over archaic "blue laws" and Sunday opening for merchants, gives excellent case-study material. Here is enough of a cross section to point up the problems arising. The various situations and how they were resolved will give aid to other communities and

ic leaders who have similar prob-
ns. Ward has done a careful piece
research work in the communities
nsidered.

In the American situation the
thor points out how Sunday laws
e a holdover from our Puritan back-
ound. Legislatures keep such laws
the books of the various states be-
use of the pressure of the Roman
atholic church, Protestant churches
d labor unions (p. 16, 37). Hiley
ard is disturbed at the pressure that
ajority religious groups exercise here
the expense of Jews and Seventh-
ay Adventists. His thesis is that it
ows undue interference of the
urch in the affairs of the state. At
e same time, the author recognizes
at the problem is not alone religious
ut also social. The general position
f labor unions in favoring Sunday
losing has no relation to organized
eligion but is based solely on protect-
ng the workers against undue exploi-
ation. It is the feeling of this reviewer
hat Ward's deeply Christian position,
with its emphasis on the challenge of
he spirit and upon freedom of view-
oint for all religious faiths, betrays
im in finding a realistic solution in
n admittedly different area. Minor-
ties have their rights, which must be
espected. As a boy in New York I
remember vividly an orthodox Jewish
curio dealer in whose shop I browsed
for junk to delight a twelve-year-old.
This man faithfully closed on Saturday
until sundown but could not do busi-
ness on Sunday. At the same time,
overwhelming majorities likewise have
their rights and you get chaos (as
Ward admits, p. 117) without some
regulation. The new highway slums
of Saddle River and the billboard
jungles along many of our main roads
are vivid evidence of what happens
when every man does that which is
right in his own eyes. Society must
step in with some control. Ward feels
so strongly on the nonregulatory em-
phasis that he even writes: "The fact
that Sunday must be kept aside as a
holy day in homage to God is in itself
a terrible thought for a Christian in
an ethic of involvement. But more
terrible is the naive popular assump-
tion that Sunday must be preserved
as a day for the family's moral and
spiritual benefit. Observing a family
day on a day also set aside for God,
and defending the institution on the
basis of family necessity, appear to be
not only irreligious but blasphemy"
(p. 92). In another place he says, "The
question is not one for the church to
decide" (is this docetic?) yet seven
lines later: "let the church present a
host of alternatives" (p. 116) and . . .
"it might campaign for a week-end
closing" (p. 117). Politics have always
been the art of the possible and some-
times religion is too. A three days
sabbath, as he hints for an ultimate
solution, is at least one day too many!
Some of us still enjoy working. Ward
is confusing when he cautions the
church: "Do not assert principles . . .

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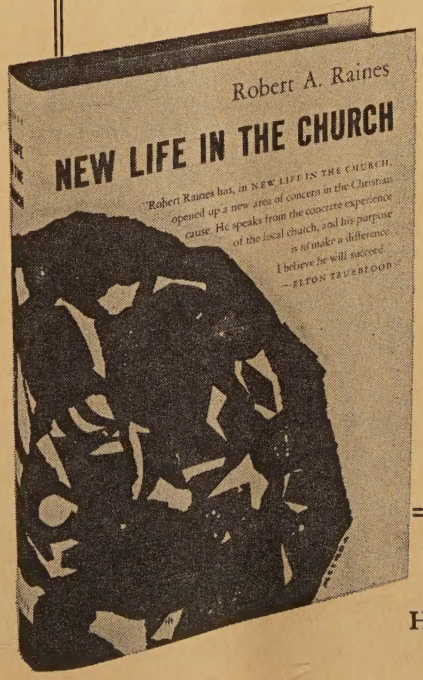

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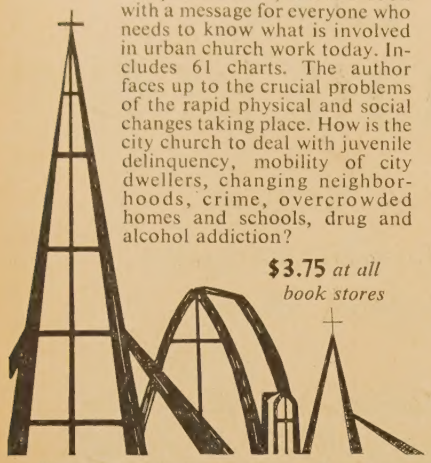

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but respect multiple principles rather than single principles" (p. 113, 115). However, you cannot help but be challenged with his position of ultimate Christian commitment "A person living under grace through the power of the Holy Spirit forms his own limits" (p. 118). Like the pacifists, he excites your admiration though you know his solution is not realistic.

The chapter "Search for a Day" has an excellent treatment of the relevance of the cross for modern Christian thinking, though its application to sabbath observance or its lack is somewhat strained. Ward knows his theologians and is familiar with the latest in religious thought. His chapter "Where Does Sunday Come From," shows careful research and is probably as good a treatment of the historical background as is available. The footnotes are well documented and the index is a help. An aside for the publisher: When will you become realistic and ask yourself, "Must a 160-page book carry a $3.95 price tag?" — *Hillyer H. Straton, First Baptist Church, Malden, Mass.*

THE TRADING POST

[You are invited to make free use of these sermon ideas, outlines, texts, thought primers, illustrations and quotations provided that for each one used you submit one of your own of equal quality and originality. Send all items for exchange to The Trading Post, The Pulpit, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5, Ill. Items accepted will be published with the name of the sender. — Ed.]

Rev. William F. Keesecker of Wichita, Kansas, has culled the following quotations from Calvin's *Institutes* and suggests that they might be useful in our sermonizing: "The scripture, collecting in our minds the otherwise confused notions of Deity, dispels the darkness, and gives us a clear view of the true God." — Book 1, Chapter 6, Sec. 1.; "Lastly, if our success be not equal to our wishes and hopes, yet we shall be restrained from impatience, and from execrating our condition, whatever it may be; because we shall know, that this would be murmuring against God, at whose pleasure are dispensed riches and poverty, honor and contempt." — Book 3, Chapter 7, Sec. 11; "What was the opinion of Jerome, I regard not; let us enquire what is truth." — Book 2, Chapter 7, Sec. 5.

Most Americans are fleeing from tension. Dr. Howard A. Rusk, New York University — Bellevue Medical Center, sees it differently. He says, "Stress is really an integral part of life. We set our whole pattern of life by our stress end-point. If we hit it exactly, we live dynamic, purposeful, useful, happy lives. If we go over, we break. If we stay too far under, we vegetate."

Outline:

Shadow of a rock in a weary plain
Shadow of a tree
Shadow of his wing
Shadow of his hand.

(See *Great Texts of the Bible*, Psalms XXIV-CXIX, p. 250)

"Man, after his physical birth, has to go through continuous processes of birth. Merging from the mother's womb is the first act of birth; from her breast, the second; from her arms, the third. From here on the process of birth can stop; the person can develop into a socially adjusted and useful person and yet remain stillborn in a spiritual sense. If he is to develop into what he potentially is as a human being he must continue to be born, that is, he must continue to dissolve primary ties of soil and blood. He must proceed from one act of separation to the next. He must give up certainty and defenses, and take a leap into the act of commitment, concern and love. — From *Religion and Culture: Essays in Honor of Paul Tillich*, edited by Walter Leibrecht, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959).* — Submitted by Mrs. A. W. Geigley, Fairfield, Pa.

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Pulpit Calendar

Feb. 2 — Presentation of Jesus in the Temple.
Feb. 5 — 5th Sunday after Epiphany.
Feb. 12 — Race Relations Sunday.
Feb. 15 — Ash Wednesday.
Feb. 17 — World Day of Prayer.
Feb. 19 — Universal Day of Prayer for Students. 1st Sunday in Lent.
Feb. 19-26 — Brotherhood Week.
Feb. 26 — 2nd Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 5 — 3rd Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 12 — 4th Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 19 — Passion Sunday.
Mar. 25 — The Annunciation.
Mar. 26 – Apr. 1 — Holy Week.
Mar. 26 — Palm Sunday.
Mar. 30 — Maundy Thursday.
Mar. 31 — Good Friday.
Apr. 1 — Easter Eve.
Apr. 2 — Easter.
Apr. 9 — 1st Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 16 — National Christian College Day.
Apr. 23 — 3rd Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 30 — 4th Sunday after Easter.

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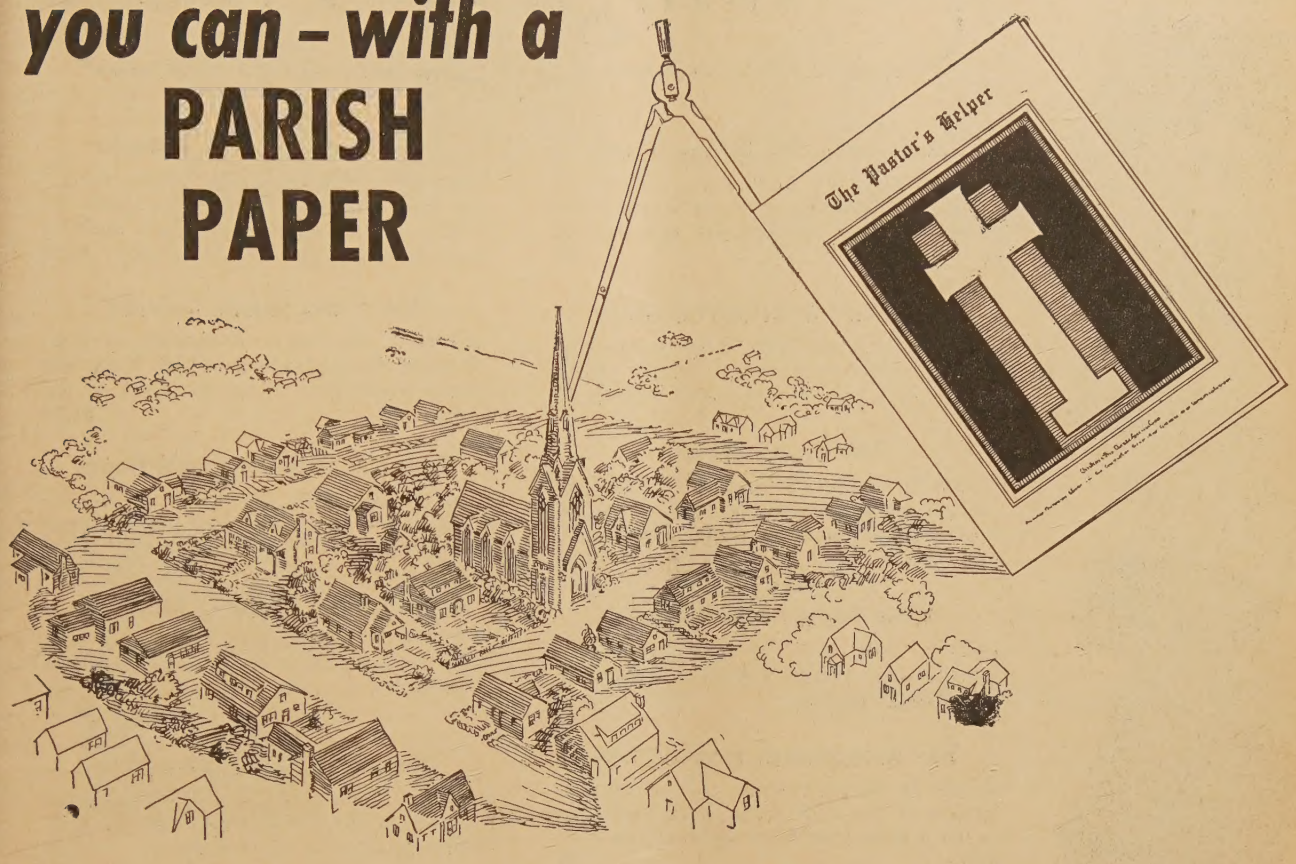

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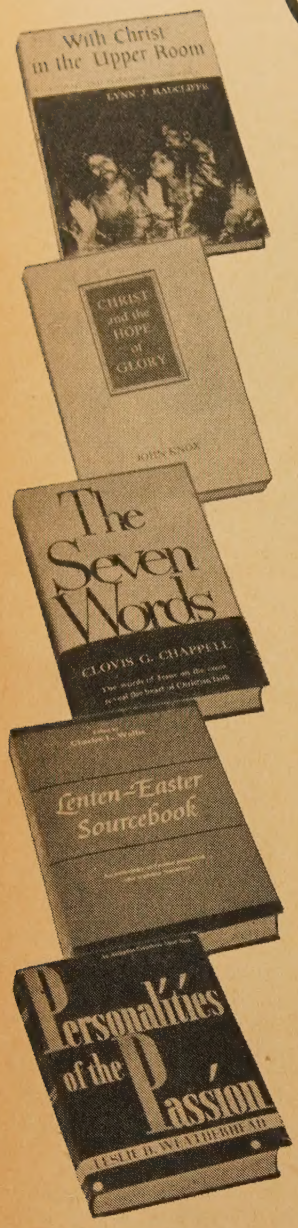

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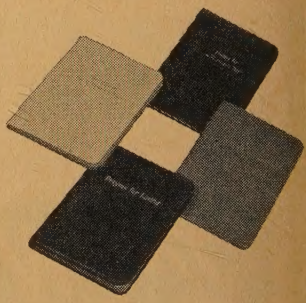

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